

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An encryption apparatus for encrypting and transmitting a bit stream of media information which is sent from a transmitting terminal, said encryption apparatus comprising:
 - means for deciding a type of the bit stream; and
 - means for encrypting the bit stream in accordance with the type of the bit stream decided by said means for deciding.
2. The encryption apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the type of the bit stream is determined by the number of bits or difficulty in cryptanalysis.
3. The encryption apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the type of the bit stream is determined by difficulty in restoration of the media information after a part of ciphertext is cryptanalysis.
4. A decryption apparatus comprising:
 - means for receiving a bit stream sent from a transmitting terminal;
 - means for deciding as to whether the received bit stream is encrypted or not; and
 - means for decrypting the received bit stream when a decision is made that the received bit stream is encrypted.

5. The decryption apparatus as claimed in claim 4,
further comprising means for transmitting a bit stream
passing through the decryption by said means for decrypting
5 to a receiving terminal.

6. An authentication information assignment apparatus that provides authentication information to a bit stream of media information sent from a transmitting terminal, and sends them, said authentication information assignment apparatus comprising:

means for deciding a type of the bit stream; and
means for providing the authentication information
in accordance with the type of the bit stream decided by
15 said means for deciding.

7. The authentication information assignment apparatus as claimed in claim 6, wherein the type of the bit stream is determined by the number of bits or a degree of effect 20 of tampering.

8. An authentication apparatus comprising:
 - means for receiving a bit stream sent from a transmitting terminal;
 - 25 means for deciding as to whether the received bit stream is provided with authentication information or not; and

means for making authentication based on the received bit stream, when a decision is made that the received bit stream is provided with the authentication information.

5 9. The authentication apparatus as claimed in claim 8, further comprising means for sending information about an authentication result obtained by said means for authentication.

10 10. The authentication apparatus as claimed in claim 8, further comprising means for transmitting the bit stream to a receiving terminal, when said means for making authentication gives an authentication result that the received bit stream is valid.

15 11. An encryption method performed by an encryption apparatus for encrypting and transmitting a bit stream of media information which is sent from a transmitting terminal, said encryption method comprising the steps of:
20 deciding a type of the bit stream; and
encrypting the bit stream in accordance with the type of the bit stream decided.

12. A decryption method comprising the steps of:
25 receiving by a decryption apparatus a bit stream sent from a transmitting terminal;
deciding as to whether the received bit stream is

encrypted or not; and

decrypting the received bit stream when a decision is made that the received bit stream is encrypted.

5 13. The decryption method as claimed in claim 12, further comprising the step of transmitting a bit stream that is decrypted at the step of decrypting from said decryption apparatus to a receiving terminal.

10 14. An authentication information assignment method performed by an authentication information assignment apparatus that provides authentication information to a bit stream of media information sent from a transmitting terminal, and sends them, said authentication information

15 assignment method comprising the steps of:

deciding a type of the bit stream; and

providing the authentication information in accordance with the type of the bit stream decided.

20 15. An authentication method comprising the steps of:

receiving by a decryption apparatus a bit stream sent from a transmitting terminal;

deciding as to whether the received bit stream is provided with authentication information or not; and

25 making authentication based on the received bit stream, when a decision is made that the received bit stream is provided with the authentication information.

16. The authentication method as claimed in claim 15,
further comprising the step of sending information about
an authentication result obtained at the step of making
5 authentication.

17. The authentication method as claimed in claim 15,
further comprising the step of transmitting the bit stream
from said decryption apparatus to a receiving terminal,
10 when the step of making authentication gives an
authentication result that the received bit stream is
valid.